

**ADELAIDE DEAF COMMUNITY CHURCH with  
NURIOOTPA UNITING CHURCH.**

**October 24<sup>th</sup> 2004**

**How does God see you?**

**2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18, Luke 18:9-14**

In the Gospel reading today, we heard that Jesus was having a go at the Pharisees, who considered themselves far more morally upright and blessed financially than the general population. Not for them the lazy low class people. Oh no, we use our brains, we work and study hard, and God has to bless us, no doubt about that, is how the Pharisees see themselves. Without realizing it, they try hard to make themselves look good for themselves and God. But does God see it like that?

Then Jesus tells about the tax collector who realizes he is a downright rotten example of a human being, and prays to God as a sinner, thru and thru, beating his chest, his head bowed to the ground asking for forgiveness. He doesn't dare look up to God. Two totally different attitudes! What Jesus is getting at, is our problem of judging others. Just like the Pharisees who without thinking or realizing it, we are just as guilty of judging others by our standards. It doesn't matter if we are rich or poor, high or low, we still do it. Jesus is using this story to help us see ourselves better, both intellectually and spiritually.

(Let's use a mirror to help us with this. If I show you the mirror, what you see? Yes, "it's me." If I put mirror in front of myself, but keep talking to you, can you see me? No, you will only see part of me. Conversation between us will be difficult, because the mirror is in the way. In the same way, the Pharisee has this mirror in front of him, between him and God. As a result, he is full of himself, does all the talking, doesn't let God talk to him. But the sinner has put the mirror down, his head is bowed, he sees nothing good about himself, knows he is entirely at mercy of God, gives himself to God, warts and all, and asks for forgiveness.)

**1. The Pharisee represents the average norm of society (standard morality).**

The good things we have learned from school, our parents, church, are very useful, and we live by them. But these good rules, learned from a young age, can often and easily become the standard by which we judge or compare ourselves with others, and THAT does become a problem. If we follow those rules strictly, and in doing so, DO we see ourselves better than normal society? Because all the others seem to break those rules? After all, who is it that sets these rules for us to live by? Do we really follow them perfectly?

## **2. The Tax Collector represents repentance.**

The tax collector means us who have been brought into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. It's for all of us who realize we are never perfect, are always sinners, no matter how hard we try to follow the commandments. We realize we are always at the mercy of God, and know this verse from Romans 3:23, *"Everyone has sinned, and is far away from God's saving presence."* Another verse we all know Jesus said (to the young man) is this, *"No one is good, except God alone."* We have to look beyond ourselves, and know that although it is good and right to live as Jesus wants us to live, and therefore reflect our Christian faith, we can never save ourselves, but are fully dependent on the mercy of God.

## **3. Peace is only available when we realize our sinfulness.**

One of the remarkable things about the great cricketer and member of Bradman's team, Keith Miller, who died last week, was his ability to be comfortable with everyone, high or low. Thus, he could have a chat with an English royal, or a street beggar in India. He didn't have any airs, treated all with the same courtesy, and respect. He was once invited by a wealthy man to have lunch in a posh restaurant, but after the meal, he noticed a beggar sitting outside on the footpath who yelled something cricket to him. So Miller had a long chat with him about cricket, just as he did with the rich man, who was very annoyed. Miller came from a very humble background, and never forgot it. He was honest enough to say that cricket was only a game, but yes, it gave him opportunities to meet people. So, we ourselves should never forget that we are sinners, saved only by Jesus' love and death on the cross, and knowing this, treat everybody with this same love. Be honest, be humble. As Jesus said, *"Everyone who humbles himself will be made great."* Thus, our duty as Christians is to bring the gospel to all people, no matter who they are. We are to see people with the same loving eyes that God sees us. Amen.

## HOW DOES GOD SEE YOU/US ?

Pharisees: see themselves as smart, they study/work hard, earn good money, so see that as God's blessing them good in life, say they keep all commandments better than others, so are blessed better than everyone else by God!

Tax Collectors: are considered scum, low class, collect money (often overcharge) from Jews to pay Romans who pay soldiers to keep them (Jews) under bondage! But this collector not happy, he knows he often sins by overcharging, but is trapped and hated by both Jews and Romans. He pours out his sins to God, asking for mercy and forgiveness.

1. Pharisees.....are we like them?

Most of us have learned the good rules from God's Word (Ten C) parents, SS, church, schools. That's good. But do we compare ourselves better than others because we know the rules, because we live cleaner more morally upright lives?  
If we do, we are like Pharisees!

2. Tax Collectors.....are we like them?

The tax collector was brought into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. He realized he was a thorough sinner, can't help sinning, knows he breaks Ten C one way or the other, knows he fully needs God's mercy and asks for forgiveness everyday.  
If you are like that, you are on right track!

3. Perfect peace only comes with repentance and forgiveness.

Cricketer Keith Miller treated all people with equal honesty and respect, whether royalty, or street beggars. Had many friends. Never forgot his humble background.

Same for us. We must never forget we are sinners, always need to ask God with honesty and humbleness for forgiveness. Our duty is always to bring Gospel to all people, no matter who they are! We are to serve all people with same loving eyes as God.